

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 06530 040959Z
ACTION DLOS-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 OES-07 AGRE-00 TRSE-00
OMB-01 INT-05 CG-00 DOTE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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R 040912Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7469
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 6530

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, EFIS, UR, JA
SUBJECT: USSR-JAPAN FISHERIES TALKS: ROUND THREE

REF: TOKYO 6433

1. MOFA 1ST EAST EUROPE DEPDIVDIR AOKI ON EVE OF THIRD ROUND OF JAPAN-SOVIET FISHERIES NEGOTIATIONS WAS APPREHENSIVE THAT DOMESTIC FISHING INTERESTS MIGHT BREAK RANKS WITH GOJ IF NO AGREEMENT REACHED IN NEXT WEEK OR SO. (EUROPEAN BUREAU COUNSELLOR KATO HAD COMMENTED IN SIMILAR VEIN TO POLCOUNS MAY 2.) AOKI TOLD EMBOFF TIME WAS ON SOVIET SIDE: ALTHOUGH COOPERATIVE PRESS HAD PORTRAYED NATION AS UNITED IN DETERMINATION TO DEFEND JAPANESE CLAIM TO DISPUTED "NORTHERN TERRITORIES," FONOFF AND MINISTRY OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY WERE UNDER GROWING PRESSURE FROM FISHING INDUSTRY TO REACH AGREEMENT SOON.

2. AOKI SAID FISHING INDUSTRY LEADERS (AMONG WHOM HE INCLUDED UNION CHIEFS) UNDERSTOOD THAT SOONER OR LATER JAPAN WOULD BE SQUEEZED OUT OF SEA OF OKHOTSK, AND THAT

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PAGE 02 TOKYO 06530 040959Z

LONG-TERM SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS OF 200,000 "NORTHERN SEA FISHERMEN" WAS GOJ ASSISTANCE IN SHIFTING THEM TO OTHER EMPLOYMENT, AS WAS DONE FOR HOKKAIDO COAL MINERS WHEN MINES BECAME UNECONOMIC. TO MAKE SMOOTH TRANSITION, GOJ NEEDED SEVERAL YEARS. UNPUBLICIZED DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN GOJ AND INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES HAD THEREFORE CENTERED ON (1) HOW TO PERSUADE SOVIETS TO ALLOW GRADUAL

PHASING-DOWN OF JAPANESE OPERATIONS IN SOVIET 200-MILE ZONE, AND (2) EXTENT OF GOJ EMERGENCY COMPENSATION AND ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE.

3. INDUSTRY LEADERS AND GOJ WERE NOW FACING, HOWEVER, INCIPENT REBELLION BY RANK-AND-FILE, WHICH TENDED TO BELIEVE THAT JAPAN HAD UNSHAKEABLE RIGHT TO NORTHERN-SEA FISHERIES (DEVELOPED BY THEIR GRANDFATHERS) AND THAT FISHERMEN'S LIVELIHOOD WAS BEING SACRIFICED IN QUIXOTIC STRUGGLE TO MAINTAIN JAPANESE CLAIM TO NORTHERN ISLANDS. TO MAINTAIN OWN AUTHORITY, INDUSTRY LEADERS MIGHT HAVE TO VOICE SUPPORT FOR THESE EMOTION-LADEN IDEAS.

4. ADMITTING THAT GOJ SAW NO DAYLIGHT IN SOVIET PRONOUNCEMENTS, AOKI SAID THAT BREAKTHROUGH WAS ESSENTIAL IN PRESENT ROUND. GOJ WOULD BE FLEXIBLE ON ALL POINTS SAVE ABANDONING CLAIM TO NORTHERN ISLANDS. IT WOULD SEARCH HARD FOR FORMULA THAT PERMITTED USSR AS WELL TO SAVE FACE, AND WOULD POSE NO OBJECTION TO DE FACTO SOVIET CONTROL OF FISHING IN DISPUTED WATERS. SHOULD MUTUALLY AGREED FORMULA BE FOUND, JAPANESE WOULD CONSIDER THEM-SELVES FORTUNATE TO GET 1977 QUOTA OF ONE MILLION TONS (VERSUS 1976 CATCH OF 1.7 MILLION TONS).

SHOESMITH

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